



Mark Twain Circular

Newsletter of the Mark Twain Circle of America

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Elmira 2001

John Bird
Winthrop University

Those fortunate enough to have been in Elmira, New York this August were treated to an academic conference filled with lively, thought-provoking papers, sumptuous dinners, joyous social gatherings, and several special events. The official title was "Elmira 2001: The Fourth International Conference on the State of Mark Twain Studies," held August 16-18, 2001 on the campus of Elmira College, organized by the Elmira College Center for Mark Twain Studies. Unofficially, it could be called the world's finest gathering of Twain scholars and enthusiasts. Held every four years since 1989, this year's conference was, in the opinion of many, the best yet.

There were ten panels in plenary session, with topics including "Mark Twain and the Body," "Mark Twain in Pieces," and "Mark Twain at His Funniest"; two pairs of concurrent sessions; discussion groups on teaching various Twain works, including *Roughing It* and *The Gilded Age*; and a concluding roundtable discussion, "The Future of Mark Twain Studies." That future seems bright indeed, given the quality of the papers and discussions, by scholars from all corners of the United States, as well as distant corners of the world: England, Northern Ireland, Germany, Japan, Korea, Portugal, and Jordan. The attendees feasted

intellectually on all things Twain for the three days.

And literally, attendees feasted, too, with a series of dinners and social events that provided even more time for discussion and camaraderie. Especially notable were Friday night's "Supper at Saranac," which included canoes as decoration and trout cooked to order, and Saturday night's dinner at Quarry Farm in honor of Louis J. Budd's 80th birthday. It's always a treat to sit in the rocking chairs on the porch of Quarry Farm, although 40 or so stalwarts climbed up the hill in the dark to the original site of the octagonal study, then lit up 40 or so cigars and puffed away. (It was remarked that all the cigars there probably did not match Mark Twain in a single day.) Late each night, a few more cigars were lit and more than a few glasses raised at The Cornpone Pub on campus (cornpone opinions given freely).

One special highlight was the presentation of the Henry Nash Smith Award to Howard Baetzhold. Another was a preview of the upcoming Ken Burns film *Mark Twain*, includ-

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Call for Papers • 2002 ALA Conference

Laura Skandera-Trombley
Coe College
President, MTCA

The Mark Twain Circle will sponsor the following panels at the American Literature Association Conference, May 30-June 2 in Long Beach, CA:

Panel One: “*Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Pedagogy and Critical Editions.” The intention is to have a panel discussing the various editions of *Adventures of Huck Finn*, specifically their use in the classroom. A variety of editions would be welcome and they could be critically reviewed. No matter the edition chosen there are always issues associated with that choice: whether or not to include the raftsmen's chapter, the importance of textual illustrations, etc.

Panel Two: "Would someone please suggest a definitive biography dealing with Mr. Clemens' life history?" Earlier this year there was a spirited discussion on TWAIN-L@YORKU.CA about what constitutes "definitive" Mark Twain biography. Recommendations included such well-known biographers as Kaplan and Hill, as well as votes to bypass published biographies in favor of the Mark Twain Project's volumes of *Mark Twain's Letters* and of his *Notebooks and Journals*. Papers would address such topics as whether the term "definitive" biography is a myth or if biography as a genre should be considered a responsible defining of a subject's existence.

Please send paper proposals to lskander@coe.edu.

ing remarks by director Ken Burns and writer Dayton Duncan. The preview merely whets the appetite for the PBS presentation in January, which is sure to set off even more public interest in Mark Twain and a great deal of discussion in Mark Twain circles. A packed Gibson Theatre was an exciting place to be that night.

But then, Elmira was an exciting place to be for the three days—truly the center of the Twain world for that time. Participants had several opportunities to thank Gretchen Sharlow and her staff at the Center for Mark Twain Studies, as well as the conference planning committee, but they should be thanked again for such a memorable, rich, and fun conference. “Do we have to wait until 2005?” someone asked near the end. Yes, I suppose we do, but it will be interesting to see how all those connected with the Elmira conference top this one. As one who has attended all four so far, I intend to be there to find out.

Charles Neider

Kent Rasmussen

The name of Charles Neider is familiar to everyone in the field of Mark Twain studies, yet when he died in his Princeton, New Jersey home on July 4th of this year, his passing went largely unnoticed within the field, even though his obituary went out on the New York Times News Service. He published at least fifteen editions of Mark Twain writings, but few people currently active in Mark Twain scholarship knew him well. One reason, perhaps, was that he was of an earlier generation. Born in 1915, he did most of his work on Mark Twain between the late 1950s and the mid-1980s. Half his Mark Twain books are still in print, but he published nothing significant on Mark Twain after editing his own version of *Huckleberry Finn* in 1985—the centenary of that book's first American publication.

Another possible reason for Neider's dis-

tance from current Mark Twain people is that he had no academic affiliation and has been widely perceived as a popularizer—the kind of label whose negative connotations are typically magnified by its bearer's success, and when it came to publishing Mark Twain books, Neider was uniquely successful. If a "popularizer" is one who helps spread interest in Mark Twain, Neider well deserved the label, for it is possible that his Mark Twain editions have been more widely read than those of anyone else, including Albert Bigelow Paine and the Mark Twain Project.

A man of many parts, Neider would make an interesting study in his own right. He was born in Odessa, Russia, on January 18, 1915 and came to the United States in 1920. After graduating from City College of New York in 1938, he became a free-lance writer and editor. His writings would eventually range from a book on insects to several books on Antarctica, which he visited three times between 1969 and 1977. That remote continent was one of his chief passions, and he is probably better known for his books about it than he is for his Mark Twain books. He also wrote novels and published collections of such classic writers as Washington Irving and Leo Tolstoy. He spent his last years fighting against the cancer that eventually killed him; and before he died, he completed *Adam's Burden: An Explorer's Personal Odyssey Through Prostate Cancer*, which is scheduled for publication in October.

Neider's interest in Mark Twain began in the mid-1950s, when he read *Roughing It* while researching the Western novel he published as *The Authentic Death of Hendry Jones* (later made into the Marlon Brando film *One-eyed Jacks*). In 1957 he published his first Mark Twain collection, *The Complete Short Stories of Mark Twain*—which may well be the most widely read collection of Mark Twain's short works.

Neider followed with other collections that covered the gamut of Mark Twain writings: *The Complete Humorous Sketches and Tales of Mark Twain* (1961), *Mark Twain:*

Life As I Find It: Essays, Sketches, Tales and Other Material (1961), *Complete Essays of Mark Twain* (1963), *The Travels of Mark Twain* (1961), *The Complete Novels of Mark Twain* (1964), *The Complete Travel Books of Mark Twain* (2 volumes, 1966), *The Comic Mark Twain Reader* (1977), *The Selected Letters of Mark Twain* (1982), *Plymouth Rock and the Pilgrims and Other Salutary Platform Opinions* (1984), *Mark Twain at His Best: A Comprehensive Sampler* (1986) and *The Outrageous Mark Twain* (1987). Through those years, his books helped remind the world that Mark Twain wrote much more than *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*.

Neider's most important book, however, was arguably *The Autobiography of Mark Twain* (1959), in which he fashioned a chronological structure that was lacking in the original material and included never-before-published passages. Certainly the most widely read version of Mark Twain's autobiographical writings, that book has played a major role in shaping the public image of Mark Twain the man.

Neider also put his personal stamp on other Mark Twain books, such as *The Gilded Age*. In 1965, he published *The Adventures of Colonel Sellers*, in which he condensed all of Charles Dudley Warner's chapters to brief interchapter passages, in the same way (as Neider pointed out) that Mark Twain himself had constructed "Those Extraordinary Twins" out of the original draft of *Pudd'nhead Wilson*. Neider's edition of *A Tramp Abroad* (1977) omits what he considered the book's most tedious passages, and in his edition of *Huckleberry Finn* (1985), he condensed the "evasion" chapters. He also later edited *Papa: An Intimate Biography of Mark Twain by Susy Clemens* (1985).

The best summary of Neider's Mark Twain work can be found in his elegantly written 1967 book titled, simply, *Mark Twain*, which collected the introductions to his earlier books, along with other essays, including the well-known "Mark Twain and the Russians: An Exchange of Views" (1960). In the current light of all the Mark Twain publishing that has taken place over the past 34 years, that book makes remarkable

reading today, revealing not only the breadth and depth of Neider's knowledge of Mark Twain, but also his understanding of the man. A statement he made in his introduction to *The Complete Novels* sums up the contradictions with which he—like modern Mark Twain scholars—had long grappled: "Mark Twain was one of those wayward geniuses whom it is not always to defend or understand."

Mark Twain at the Western Literature Association 2001

Sue Maher, President
Western Literature Association

The 36th annual Western Literature Association meeting will be held in Omaha, NE this October 17-20. The conference theme is "Headwaters and Watersheds: Literary Tributaries of the West," so Mark Twain scholarship is perfect for this meeting. The Twain session this year will be entitled "Traveling with Twain."

Chair: Dave Raabe, University of Nebraska at Omaha

Papers:

1. "'How the great do tumble!': Mark Twain's Later Correspondence to the San Francisco *Daily Alta California*" (Andrew Jewell, University of Nebraska-Lincoln)
2. Chad Rohman, Dominican University, "Life Down the Mississippi as a Main Undercurrent in Mark Twain's *Pudd'nhead Wilson*"
3. Raychel Reiff, University of Wisconsin-Superior, "To Be or Not To Be: Mark Twain's Burlesque *Hamlet*"
4. Martin Zehr, Research Medical Center, Kansas City, "Twain's Mississippi and the American West: The Metaphor of Movement"

We are also scheduling sessions on other Twain contemporaries (Ambrose Bierce, Bret Harte) and 19th-century American literature topics at this meeting.

Mark Twain at SAMLA 2001

Philip Leon
The Citadel

Session Title: *Mark Twain's Defenders and Detractors*

Sponsored by: Mark Twain Circle

Chair: Philip W. Leon, The Citadel

Secretary: Joseph A. Alvarez, Central Piedmont CC

Papers:

1. "My Mark Twain Revisited"—John Bird, Winthrop U
2. "What Trouble It [Is] to Make a Book: Defenders and Detractors of Mark Twain as a Literary Artist"—Joe B. Fulton, Baylor U
3. "With Friends Like These: Damning Mark Twain with the Faintest of Praise"—Alan Gribben, Auburn U at Montgomery
4. "Letting Mark Twain Think"—Jason Gary Horn, Gordon C

Respondent: Gregg Camfield, U of the Pacific

Executive Committee:

Joe B. Fulton, Baylor U

Janet Gabler-Hover, Georgia State U

Allison Ensor, U of Tennessee

Current Mark Twain Bibliography

James S. Leonard
The Citadel

Current Mark Twain Bibliography is a means of giving notice of what's new in Mark Twain scholarship. Where annotations are used, they are in most cases descriptive blurbs provided by publishers (or in some cases, by authors) with value judgments edited out. If you have recently published something that you would like to have included in this list, send it to me by e-mail (leonardj@citadel.edu), or by other means.

Books

Norton, Charles. *Huckleberry Finn and Mark Twain: Death, Deceit, Dreams and Disguises.* Xlibris Corporation, 2000. Softcover, 8.54 x 5.38. 208 pages. \$21.99. ISBN 0-7388-4144-7. [Reviewed for the *Mark Twain Forum* on Sept. 2, 2001 by Errol Craig Sull.]

Twain, Mark. *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.* Mark Twain Library, 9. Edited by Victor Fischer and Lin Salamo with Harriet Elinor Smith and Walter Blair. University of California Press, 2001. With the original illustrations by E.W. Kemble and John Harley. 588 pages, 5-3/8 x 8-1/2 inches, 221 illustrations, 5 maps. Clothbound: \$45.00 0-520-22806-5. Paperback: \$14.95 0-520-22838-3. "This is the first edition of *Huckleberry Finn* ever to be based on Mark Twain's entire original manuscript including its first 663 pages, which had been lost for more than a hundred years when they were discovered in 1990 in a Los Angeles attic. The text of the Mark Twain Library edition (first published in 1985) has been re-edited using this manuscript, restoring thousands of details of wording, spelling, and punctuation that had been corrupted by Mark Twain's typist, typesetters, and proofreaders. . . . It also contains a new gathering of manuscript pages, photographically reproduced, and an appendix of passages from the manuscript, including the long-lost 'ghost story,' which illustrate how extensively Mark Twain revised his work. The editors have also revised and updated their explanatory notes, the maps of the Mississippi

River valley, and the glossary of slang and dialect words."

Articles

Bowden, Betsy. "Gloom and Doom in Mark Twain's *Connecticut Yankee*, from Thomas Malory's *Morte Darthur*." *Studies in American Fiction* 28.2 (Autumn 2000): 179B202.

Oggel, Terry L. "Speaking Out About Race: 'The United States of Lyncherdom' Clemens Really Wrote." *Prospects: An Annual of American Cultural Studies* 25. Cambridge University Press, 2000. Includes the text of Twain's essay as it existed before being edited by Albert Bigelow Paine. Also includes bibliographical details and biographical and historical context. [Reviewed by Joe McCullough for the *Mark Twain Forum* on June 21, 2001.]

Petersson, Bo. "Who Is 'Sivilizing' Who(m)? The Function of Naivety and the Criticism of *Huckleberry Finn*—A Multidimensional Approach." *Writing in Nonstandard English.* Ed. Irma Taavitsainen, Gunnel Melchers, and Päivi Pahta. Benjamins, 1999. 101-22.

Rohman, Chad. "What Is Man? Mark Twain's Unresolved Attempt to Know." *Nineteenth Century Studies* 15 (2001): 57B72.

Slotta, Robert. "Twain Makes His Mark as Ephemera Giant." *Ephemera News* 19.3 (Spring 2001): 1, 13B17.

Dates to Circle

- **October 17-20, 2001.** Western Literature Association Conference. Mark Twain session: "Traveling with Twain." Omaha, NE.
- **November 9-11, 2001.** South Atlantic Modern Language Association Conference. Mark Twain Circle session: "Mark Twain's Detractors and Defenders." Atlanta, GA.
- **December 27-30, 2001.** Modern Language Association Annual Conference. New Orleans, LA.
- **May 30-June 2, 2001.** American Literature Association Annual Conference. Long Beach, CA.

Shelley Fisher Fishkin introduces speakers at a conference session.

Panel discussion at Elmira 2001.

Mark Twain Sites

What's Past, and Passing, and to Come

Elmira College Center for Mark Twain Studies

2001 Spring Lecture Series The Trouble Begins at Eight"

Wednesday, April 25, 2001

"'Only Heedlessly a Savage': Mark Twain's 'Indian Identity'"—Kerry Driscoll (St. Joseph's College)

Wednesday, May 9, 2001

"The View from the Porch: Place, Family, Mark Twain, and Me"—Michael J. Kiskis (Elmira College)

Wednesday, May 23, 2001

"Fact and Fiction in *Following the Equator*"—Robert Cooper (Hebrew University)

Summer Course at Quarry Farm: ENGL 5255 C "Mark Twain Themes: Reading Race in Mark Twain and Louisiana Writers George Washington Cable and Grace King" C Mary Ann Wilson (University of Louisiana at Lafayette)

2001 Fall Lecture Series The Trouble Begins at Eight"

Wednesday, Sept. 10, 2001

"Shakespeare on the Frontier: Horsey, Huck, and Hamlet"—Miriam Shillingsburg (Indiana University South Bend)

Wednesday, Oct. 10, 2001

"The Incredible Right Way to Read *Huckleberry Finn*"—Ralph Wiley (Writer/Author/Essayist/Journalist/Editor/Columnist)

Wednesday, Oct. 17, 2001

"The Creation of the Mark Twain Documentary Film: A Photographer's Perspective"—Robert Sargent Fay (Landmark College)

Everything You Need to Know . . .

ABOUT THE CIRCULAR. The *Mark Twain Circular*, newsletter of the Mark Twain Circle of America, was launched in January 1987 by Thomas A. Tenney (Editor of the *Mark Twain Journal*). James Leonard (The Citadel) assumed editorial responsibility with the February 1987 *Circular* and has continued in that capacity until the present. The *Circular* is published four times per year (Jan.–March, April–June, July–Sept., and Oct.–Dec.) and is mailed, by the editor, to all members of the Mark Twain Circle. The *Circular* prints news of Mark Twain events and scholarship, directories of members, short biographical articles and critical commentaries, and current bibliography. Subscribers are distributed among 44 states and 14 foreign countries.



ABOUT THE CIRCLE. The Mark Twain Circle of America was formed at an organizational meeting held at the 1986 Modern Language Association convention in New York; the membership has since grown to approximately 350. Current officers are displayed on p. 8. Past Presidents are Louis J. Budd, Alan Gribben, Pascal Covici, Jr., David E. E. Sloane, Victor A. Doyno, Michael J. Kiskis, and Shelley Fisher Fishkin. Past Executive Coordinators: Everett Emerson, James D. Wilson, Michael J. Kiskis, Laura Skandera-Trombley, and Joseph A. Alvarez. Although many members are academic specialists, the Circle also includes many non-academic Twain enthusiasts. The Circle is in communication with other Mark Twain organizations, including those associated with sites important in his life, and cooperates with them.



ABOUT THE MARK TWAIN JOURNAL. Founded in 1936 by Cyril Clemens, the *Mark Twain Journal* is the oldest American magazine devoted to a single author. In 1982, the *Journal* moved to its present home in Charleston, S.C., under the editorship of Thomas A. Tenney. There are two issues per year, Spring and Fall, with a new volume each year (rather than every second year, as in the past). The *Journal* tends to appear late, and begs your patient indulgence. New subscribers may wish to begin with the 2000 issues rather than the 2001. Back issues from 13:1 to the present are available at \$5.00 each, postpaid (\$2.50 on orders for ten or more; pre-1983 issues are thinner than modern ones, and some are badly reprinted). An index 1936-83 counts as a back issue.

To: Prof. John Bird
Exec. Coordinator, Mark Twain Circle
English Department
230 Bancroft
Winthrop University
Rock Hill, SC 29733

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